

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

*Style Guide*

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**I. SHORT GUIDE TO BLUEBOOK (20TH EDITION)**

**A. Citations in Court Documents**

1. Cases (Bluebook (“BB”) Rules B10 and 10, with modifications)

**Examples:**

*Field v. Mans*, 516 U.S. 59, 67 (1995).

*Thompkins v. Lil’ Joe Records, Inc.*, 476 F.3d 1294, 1315 (11th Cir. 2007).

*In re Trusted Media Holdings, L.L.C.*, No. 07-13429, 2008 WL 1816396, \*7 (11th Cir. Apr. 23, 2008).

*Bradley Factor, Inc. v. United States*, 86 F. Supp. 2d 1140, 1146 (M.D. Fla. 2000).

SHORT FORM: *Bradley Factor*, 86 F. Supp. 2d at 1144.

*Biscayne Boulevard Props., Inc. v. Graham*, 65 So. 2d 858, 859 (Fla. 1953).

*Woodard v. Dicks*, 306 B.R. 700, 705-06 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2004).

ALTERNATIVE SHORT FORM: 306 B.R. at 705-06.

**Modification:** To follow common usage in Florida’s federal and state courts, cite to Florida district courts of appeal cases in the following format:

*Nobles v. Citizens Mortgage Corp.*, 479 So. 2d 822, 822 (Fla. 2d DCA 1985).

2. Bankruptcy Cases (BB Rule 10.2.1(a))

a. If the opinion was issued in the context of the main bankruptcy case, cite the case name as the last name of the debtor prefaced by “*In re*.” Phrases such as “in the matter of” or “petition of” are always abbreviated as “*In re*.” Example: *In re Hamrick*, 551 B.R. 860 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2016); *In re Schwalm*, 380 B.R. 630 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2008).

b. If the opinion was issued in the context of an adversary proceeding, list the adversary names on either side of a “v.” Phrases such as “on the relation of” or “on behalf of” are abbreviated “ex rel.” Example: *U.S. ex rel. Clausen v. Lab Corp of Am., Inc.*, 290 F.3d 1301 (11th Cir. 2002). When the opinion lists only the adversary parties, omit all procedural phrases except “ex rel.” Example: *Menchise v. Akerman Senterfitt*, 532 F.3d 1146 (11th Cir. 2008).

c. If both the adversary parties’ names and the non-adversary case name are listed at the

beginning of an opinion, list both in the citation. Example: *Spence v. Hintze (In re Hintze)*, 570 B.R. 369 (Bankr. N.D. Fla. 2017).

3. Statutes (BB Rules B12 and 12)

28 U.S.C. § 157(b) (2012).  
11 U.S.C. §§ 544-548 (2012).  
Fla. Stat. § 95.11(3) (2017).

4. Federal and Local Rules (BB Rules B12.1.3 and 12.9.3, Local Rule 1001-1(e))

Fed. R. Bankr. P. 6003.  
Fed. R. Civ. P. 8.  
Fed. R. Evid. 410.  
S.D. Fla. R. 87.2.

This Court's Local Rule 1001-1(A) should be cited as follows: N.D. Fla. LBR 1001-1(A).

NOTE – This Court's Local Rules are currently being updated, which will change the way the Local Rules are Cited. Once the updated Local Rules are officially adopted this Court's Local Rule 1001-1(A) should be cited as follows: FLNB Local Rule 1001-1(A).

5. Books, Treatises, and Reference Materials (Non-Periodical) (BB Rules B15 and 15)

10 *Collier on Bankruptcy* ¶ 6003.02[2] (16th ed. 2010).  
*Black's Law Dictionary* 712 (10th ed. 2014).  
*The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et al. eds., 20th ed. 2015).

6. Articles in Periodicals (BB Rules B16 and 16)

Michael Barbado, *Retailing Chains Caught in a Wave of Bankruptcies*, N.Y. Times, Apr. 15, 2008, at A1. Eugene R. Wedoff, *Means Testing in the New 707(b)*, 79 Am. Bankr. L.J. 231, 243 (2005).

7. Court/Litigation Documents (BB Rule B17, Table BT.1)

Citations to court documents are enclosed in parentheses. The ending period of a citation sentence goes inside the parentheses, but a citation clause within a sentence has no final period and also should not be set off with commas.

**Examples:** (Doc. 74; Pl.'s Ex. 13.) (Trial Tr. vol. 2, 21:12-23:4, Oct. 3, 2008.)

**Examples in Text:** The Debtor's schedules (Doc. 1) reveal improperly exempted assets that were the subject of the Trustee's objection (Doc. 15). The Court sustained the objection to the Debtor's claim of exemption in its order of July 9. (Doc. 20.)

8. Legislative Materials (BB Rule 13)

H.R. 3150, 105th Cong. (1998).  
H.R. Rep. No. 109-31 (2005), reprinted in 2005 U.S.C.C.A.N. 88.

9. Constitutions (BB Rule B11, 11)

U.S. Const. art. 4, § 1.

Fla. Const. art. X, § 4.

10. Short Form Citation and “Id.” (BB Rules B4 and 4)

a. The first time any authority is cited, it must be cited in full. After the first citation, if the reference is clear, a “short form” should be used. The following are all proper short forms of *In re Fundamental Long Term Care, Inc.*, 501 B.R. 770, 775 (Bankr. M.D. Fla. 2013):

*In re Fundamental*, 501 B.R. at 775.

501 B.R. at 775.

*Id.* at 775.

b. The short form “*id.*” is used to refer to the immediately preceding authority, and may *only* be used when the preceding citation contains only *one* source. If no page number is given, “*id.*” refers to the page cited in the immediately preceding authority. “*Id.*” can be used as a short cite for all types of authorities.

11. Introductory Signals (BB Rules B1.2 and 1.2)

Citation sentences should often begin with an introductory signal to indicate the type of support provided by the authority. Examples:

*See*: signals that the cited authority clearly supports, but does not directly state, the proposition

*Contra*: signals that the cited authority directly contradicts a given point

*But see*: signals that the cited authority contradicts the stated proposition implicitly or contains dicta that contradicts the stated proposition

No signal should be used if the authority directly states the proposition, is the source of a quotation, or is referred to in the text.

12. Bluebook Tables: Abbreviations in Citations

<b>Category</b>	<b>Table</b>	<b>Related Bluebook Rule</b>
Case Reporters	BB T.1	Federal, p. 233; Florida, p. 258; BB Rule B10.1.2
Case Names	BB T.6	BB Rules B10.1.1, B10.1.1(vi) & 10.2
Court Names	BB T.7	Use in case cites, BB Rule 10.4
Geographic Terms	BB T.10	Use in case cites, BB Rules B10.1.1, 10.2.2 & 10.4
Months	BB T.12	Use in case cites, BB Rule 10.5
Periodicals	BB T.13	Use when citing law reviews, BB Rule 16
Subdivisions	BB T.16	Use in all citations, BB Rule 3

### 13. Spacing and Abbreviations (BB Rules 6.1, B4.1.3)

- a. Generally, there are no spaces between unilateral capitals, which are single letter or numerical abbreviations, such as “2d” or “S.” Abbreviations longer than a single letter, such as “Supp.” or “Fla.,” must always be set off by spaces from other abbreviations.
- b. Abbreviations should be followed by a period unless the last letter of the abbreviation is set off by an apostrophe. Examples: Ass’n and Gov’t, but, Ctr. and Dev.
- c. United States may, but need not, be abbreviated as “U.S.” only when used as an adjective. Example: U.S. Trustee or United States Trustee, but, “representing the United States.”

## **B. Text in Court Documents**

### 1. Capitalization (BB Rules B17.3 and 8)

- a. The word “court” should be capitalized when naming any court in full or when referring to the U.S. Supreme Court. For instance, the “Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals” would be capitalized, but not “the courts of appeals.” Likewise, the “U.S. Trustee” is always capitalized.
- b. The word “court” is also capitalized in a court document when it is referring to the court issuing or receiving that document. For instance, “the Court has considered the evidence in this case,” but, “bankruptcy courts disagree on this issue.”
- c. Likewise, capitalize “plaintiff,” “defendant,” “debtor,” “trustee” or “creditor” when referring to the party in the case that is the subject of the order. For example, “The U.S. Trustee has objected to the Debtor’s claim of exemptions,” but, “The trustee in *Shoopman* objected, although the debtors had chosen to surrender their homes.”
- d. The title of court documents should be capitalized only if 1) the document was filed in the same matter as is the subject of your document and 2) the actual title or a shortened form is used. Do not capitalize generic document names. For instance, “In the Debtor’s Objection to Claim Number 5,” but, “this Court’s orders are ignored to your peril.”

### 2. Citations v. References in Text (BB Rules 1.1, 10.2.1, B1)

- a. Types of Cites: A citation may be either a sentence or a clause. A citation sentence occurs on its own after a textual sentence and is followed by a period. A citation clause occurs within a textual sentence and is set off with commas. A statute or case name may also be incorporated into a textual sentence, in which case it is not a citation at all.

**Citation Clause:** “The court in *Dicks*, 306 B.R. at 722, held that . . . .”

- b. Abbreviation: In a case name in a citation clause, only abbreviate widely known acronyms, as well as “&,” “Ass’n,” “Bros.,” “Co.,” “Corp.,” “Inc.,” “Ltd.,” and “No.” Fully abbreviate case names in citation sentences by also abbreviating pursuant to BB T.6 and T.10.
- c. Non-Citations: If a statute or a case name is being referred to in text, it is not a citation, so abbreviate nothing, and turn most symbols into words. Abbreviations should generally not be used

at all in text.

**Citation Sentence:** “The exemption does not apply. Fla. Stat. § 222.25.”

**Statute Referenced in Text:** “This Debtor cannot benefit from the exemption provided under section 222.25 of the Florida Statutes.”

### 3. Symbols (BB Rules 6.2 & 12.10)

a. The section (§) and paragraph (§) symbols are used in citations. In text, however, the words must be spelled out unless referring to a section in the United States Code. There should always be a space between the “§” and “§” symbols and a numeral. Example: 11 U.S.C. § 707(b)(2); 10 *Collier on Bankruptcy* § 6003.02[2] (15th ed. 2008).

b. The dollar (\$) and percent (%) symbols should be used whenever numerals are used, and spelled out whenever numbers are spelled out, and should never begin a sentence. There should never be a space between the “\$” or “%” symbols and a numeral. Example: \$500,000 and 11%.

### 4. Proper Usage of Legal Terms

a. Motions are either “granted” or “denied.” Applications are either “approved” or “disapproved.” Objections are either “sustained” or “overruled.” Claims are either “allowed” or “disallowed.”

b. The main bankruptcy case is a “case.” In a case you have “final evidentiary hearings” on “contested matters.” An adversary proceeding is a “proceeding.” In an adversary proceeding, you have “trials.” Final evidentiary hearings may also be referred to as “trials.”

c. When giving a deadline, using “through” and not “to” a specific date will avoid the possibly unintended consequence of shortening the period by one day.

d. For clarity, the use of defined terms is recommended.

## II. FORMAT OF ORDERS

### A. “Proposed Order Guidelines”

([http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/filing\\_requirements/4-inst.pdf](http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/filing_requirements/4-inst.pdf))  
(See Note in N.D. Fla. LBR 1007-1 / FLNB Local Rule 1007-1)

1. Font Size: 14-point
2. All margins are to be 1 ¼ inches
3. Page numbers centered in the footer on every page except the first

### B. Caption

1. The caption of orders entered in the main bankruptcy case should match the following format:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
\_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION

In re: Case No. 13-12345-KKS  
Chapter 13

John Doe and Jane Doe,

Debtors.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

2. The caption of orders entered in adversary proceedings should match the following format:

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
\_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION

In re: Case No. 11-54321-KKS  
Chapter 11

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C.,

Debtor.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

Unfortunate Company, L.L.C., Adv. No. 11-98765-KKS

Plaintiff,

v.

Liability, Ltd.,

Defendant.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

### **C. The Case/Proceeding Number**

1. The case number should conform to the following: Case No. 13-12345-KKS
2. An adversary proceeding number: Adv. No. 11-54321-KKS
3. The first set of digits identifies the year the bankruptcy case was filed.
4. The first digit of the second set of digits signifies the division in which the case was filed:

1 = Gainesville	3 = Pensacola	4 = Tallahassee	5 = Panama City
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5. The remaining digits are the chronologically assigned case or proceeding number
6. The three uppercase letters signify the judge to whom the case is assigned:  
KKS= Karen K. Specie

### **D. Title of Order**

1. The title follows the caption after one hard return, is centered, in all caps, and bold.
2. At a minimum, the text of the bottom line of the heading should be underlined.
3. The title of the order should be a full, descriptive title detailing the nature of the motion or application ruled upon; should contain the disposition of the motion; the name of the movant; the docket number of the motion; and should completely match the title of the related motion.
4. Only one motion shall be addressed per order, unless the Court directs otherwise.

### **E. Proper Use of Legal Terms**

1. Motions are either “granted” or “denied.” Applications are either “approved” or “disapproved.” Objections are either “sustained” or “overruled.” Claims are either “allowed” or “disallowed.”

### **F. Body**

1. The body of the order should be double-spaced, justified, and laid out in unnumbered paragraphs, each beginning with a single indent.
2. The first sentence of the order should begin with “THIS CASE” or “THIS MATTER” in all caps. The sentence should recite the papers and events that resulted in the entry of the order. Orders entered “after a hearing” should include the hearing date. Papers should be identified by title, party and docket number.
3. The opening paragraph of the proposed order should contain the document number of the motion or document to which the order is related
4. If the order involves real property, it must contain the full and complete legal description and the address of the real property.
5. When referencing Proofs of Claim or items on the docket such as responses, amendments, etc., the name(s) and docket or claim number(s) of those items shall follow the reference within a parenthetical

## G. Decretal Paragraphs

1. Before the Court's decree should be the phrase " it is **ORDERED**" and "**ORDERED**" should be in all caps and bolded.
2. The decree generally is presented in either multiple numbered paragraphs or in a single unnumbered paragraph.
3. The following date and judge signature block format shall come at the completion of the decretal paragraphs:  
[Indent] DONE AND ORDERED on \_\_\_\_\_.



[Tab Right] \_\_\_\_\_  
[Tab Right] KAREN K. SPECIE  
[Tab Right] Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge

## H. Preparation and Service

1. The name of the attorney who prepared the proposed order is to be indicated at the end of the document and in 11-point in the following format: Order prepared by [Attorney's Name].

2. Proposed orders shall include one of the following statements located two hard returns after the signature block of the order:

When an attorney is to serve the order: "Attorney [Name of submitting attorney] is directed to serve a copy of this order on interested parties and file a proof of service within 3 business days of entry of the order."

When a trustee is to serve the order: "Trustee [Name of submitting trustee] is directed to serve a copy of this order on interested parties and file a proof of service within 3 business days of entry of the order."

3. The signature block and service language cannot be on the final page by itself
4. Proposed orders must be submitted in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). PDF files will not be accepted. Use the electronic submission link through CM/ECF only to submit proposed orders.



UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
\_\_\_\_\_ DIVISION

In re:

Case No. 13-12345-KKS  
Chapter 13

John Doe,

Debtor.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**HEADING CENTERED IN ALL CAPS AND BOLDED  
AND THE TEXT OF THE BOTTOM LINE IS UNDERLINED**

THIS MATTER came on for consideration without a hearing on the Court's own Motion for Uniformity (Doc. 1). Paragraphs in the body of this Order begin with a single tab indent and are unnumbered, double-spaced and justified. This Order is written in 14-point font with one and one quarter-inch margins.

For this reason, it is

**ORDERED** that the decree of the Court may be presented in a single unnumbered paragraph.

DONE and ORDERED on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
KAREN K. SPECIE  
Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge

Order prepared by John Doe.

Attorney John Doe is directed to serve a copy of this order on interested parties who are non-CM/ECF users and file a proof of service within 3 days of entry of the order